

may in fact appear highly ambiguous to the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, as well as to many friendly nations. French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, for instance, has told President Johnson that his government finds the stated conditions for peace vague. There has been no official response to this charge, apparently because the Administration wants to be vague at this point. From the viewpoint of effective bargaining this tactic may make sense; no one wants to put all his cards on the table before the game begins. But since a major problem at this point is to convince our friends and enemies of the credibility of our quest for peace, it is a strategy which has been singularly unproductive. Few there are in the world who have an absolute certainty that the United States can be trusted.

There is still another source for America's lack of full credibility. Again and again it has been stated that the U.S. is ready to halt the bombing of North Vietnam as a first step. But consider the conditions under which the first two moratoriums took place: the bombings were halted but the flow of men and material continued unabated.

In this way was a mixed signal flashed to the North Vietnamese: the bombings will stop but, for the rest, we will continue to build up troops and facilities as if nothing whatever was about to change. No doubt the American strategy was to indicate that the U.S. was fully prepared to continue the war if there was no response to the cessation of bombing. But how could the North Vietnamese possibly know for certain that the bombing gesture was anything but a trap? They couldn't, and they had the U.S. troop movements during the bombing lull to confirm their fears.

If the U.S. is to maintain a credible posture, this much is necessary: 1) a spelling out in some detail of what results the U.S. is willing to accept as the outcome of peace talks; 2) an immediate halt to air raids in the North, only this time backed up by a halt to all offensive ground actions, a halt to the movement by sea and air of fresh troops beyond the number now present, and a halt to the increment of weapons, planes, and other military supplies beyond the present quantity. In brief, a clear, consistent message, in word and deed, must be conveyed to the North.

BOMBERS FOR PORTUGAL

The Central Intelligence Agency, it has been suggested, is actually an invaluable instrument of education—informing the American people of the realities of their own government's foreign policy. A case in point: the current trial of two men for illegally flying seven B-26 bombers to Portugal (ostensibly, so that Portugal could use them against rebels in Angola and Mozambique). The accused insist that the exporting of the planes was done with the

cooperation of the C.I.A. The C.I.A. (surprise!) denies this.

Thus far testimony has included a statement by a former consultant to several U.S. intelligence agencies that he had discussed the C.I.A.'s involvement in the B-26 affair with Air Force intelligence officers and that the flights had borne the code name "Operation Sparrow." When he protested the participants' arrest, an Air Force colonel had told him to "lay off the case" because "another government agency is involved."

The C.I.A. has replied by at least partially opening its files on the matter. The facts thus produced are hardly conclusive. The trial will continue. Its outcome should be interesting, but at the moment the defendants' innocence or guilt is the court's primary concern, not ours. Our concern is with the material from the C.I.A.'s files which shows that on May 25, at least four days before the first flight of a B-26 to Portugal, the C.I.A. knew about the Portuguese government's attempts to procure these planes. Yet the flights continued till early September. Even if one accepted the C.I.A.'s contention that the flights were made without official connivance, the facts remain: (a) the flights were known to be in the offing since last May; (b) they violated the U.S. Munitions Control Act (unless, of course, there was indeed official connivance) and a U.S. pledge not to sell such aircraft to Portugal; and (c) no attempt was made to immediately halt the flights in question.

What does such a revelation do to the brave anti-apartheid rhetoric which U.S. officials spray around the U.N. and Washington these days? "We will not support policies abroad which are based on the rule of minorities or the discredited notion that men are unequal before the law," said Mr. Johnson in a major speech on Africa last summer. Perhaps seven planes for bombing Angolan villages are no more to get excited about than the millions of American dollars which reinforce South Africa's regime of apartheid. The B-26 affair is merely another example of the utter lack of seriousness in official United States pronouncements about colonialism and racism in Africa.

ANTI-POLITICS?

We hear of a move among California's New Left to place Pope John's name in nomination for governor, as a protest against the politics of both Ronald Reagan and Governor Pat Brown. The plan is bemusing (who would have thought, a decade ago, that a Pope of Rome would be a symbolic rallying point for radical social protest?) but the politics are dubious. We have here as good an example as any of the anti-politics that besets the New Left.

The threat of the radical right in California, symbolized in the rise of Ronald Reagan, has never been